

THE POINT

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE

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THE BLIZZARD OF 2005



FSC file photo

Classes were cancelled twice during the the first week of the semester as Old Man Winter dumped over two feet of snow in Fitchburg.

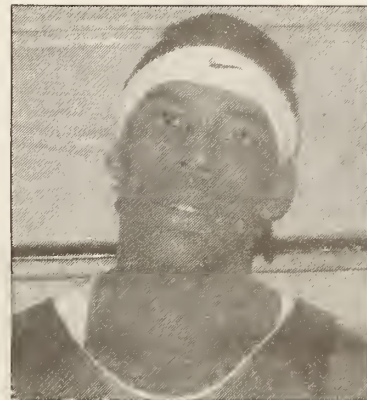
1,000 points

Rashad Cope becomes 21st Falcon to reach milestone

BY KEVIN O'MALLEY
STAFF REPORTER

Graduate student Rashad Cope became the 21st Falcon basketball player to reach the 1,000 point plateau with :55 remaining in Fitchburg State's game at Wheaton on Jan., 20, when he connected on the first of two shots from the free throw line for an even 1,000 points.

Cope received the



FSC file photo

Rashad Cope

game ball, painted to commemorate his historic game, on Feb. 1 during halftime of the Falcons 80-79 victory over Worcester State College at the Recreation Center.

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Madden made even more realistic for 2005

BY TYLER KENNEDY
STAFF REPORTER

VIDEO GAME REVIEW

EA Sports takes its pro football video game to a whole new level, distancing itself from other football games on the market, with John Madden's new and improved Madden 2005.

This year's Madden appeals to the hardcore NFL fanatics with a more realistic game play. Each year EA Sports improves the games graphics, sound quality, franchise mode, and online compatibility. But one thing has always remained the same:

high-scoring games. The offense has been almost unstoppable; a gamer could run and throw all over the defense without much effort. Now, 2005 shows a new style of game play with defense stealing the show. New and improved artificial intelligence for the defensive players makes throwing downfield risky business, and going for it on the fourth and long almost impossible. The avid NFL fan can appreciate these new aspects.

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EA Sports

EA Sports Madden 2005

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A LOOK INSIDE WXPL

COVER

Graduate student lands job as legislative aide

STAFF REPORT

Allison Vowles has a lot in common with State Rep. Jennifer Flanagan.

Both women grew up in Leominster. Flanagan has a master's degree from Fitchburg State College, and Vowles is currently pursuing a master's with the education department. As undergraduates, they each interned for

Flanagan's predecessor Mary Jane Simmons.

Flanagan, who won the representative seat in November, was Simmons' chief of staff and Vowles is Flanagan's only staff. Vowles began working as her legislative aide in January.

"Mary Jane had eight staff members and now it's just me," said Vowles, 23. "We're working on different bills and

I've been doing a lot of work with constituents. Jen is so great. She's very open-minded. She and I see eye-to-eye on a lot of things."

Vowles studied political science as a Fitchburg State undergraduate student. After receiving her bachelor's of science in political science, Vowles tried law school, but decided a master's degree in education was a better fit. She

hopes to teach middle school history, and to become a professor in the future. A career in politics is a possibility as well.

"My favorite part is helping people. I get so many different phone calls in many different areas. People are so thankful," Vowles said. "A lot of times the people who do call us — we're their last hope. They're looking to see if we can do anything for them."



Allison Vowles

MassPIRG making a difference at FSC

BY REBECCA ROTCHFORD STAFF REPORTER

With the recent 2004 presidential election still fresh in American's memory, MassPIRG members at Fitchburg State take pride in having registered 480 new voters. The number of students and young adults in the 18-24 year-old voting demographic that are actually registered to vote had been steadily decreasing over the years.

"It's important to give students the opportunity to vote in the election because politicians usually talk about issues that have nothing to do with us. If the number of 18-24 year-old voters is increased, then they'll start addressing issues that we [the students] care about," said Nicole McMahon, a MassPIRG volunteer.

According to newvotersproject.org the participation rated of this age group in 2000 election registered at a mere 36.1 percent. Conversely, about 70 percent of older voters participated in the 200 election. The web

site also indicated that because such low percentage of 18-24 year-old voters participate in elections "[they] are seldom the focus of campaign messages and rarely the focus of person-to-person mobilization campaigns."

These younger voters could have a great impact on our elections, especially in sway states that aren't predominantly democratic or republican. Yet another problem of getting young adults to vote does not lie entirely on the neglect of politicians. According to the newvotersproject.org, "surveys consistently report that young people are unconvinced that voting is an effective tool to better their communities." The site also indicated that young people don't vote because they feel "it doesn't make a difference, they aren't registered, they don't have enough information, or there is not enough time."

MassPIRG is an organization which is active in 28 colleges throughout Massachusetts, and is faced with the task of not only registering students but also convincing them that they should take the time to vote.

'It's important to give students the opportunity to vote in the election because politicians usually talk about issues that have nothing to do with us. If the number of 18-24 year-old voters is increased, then they'll start addressing issues that we [the students] care about.'

Nicole McMahon, a MassPIRG volunteer

Dana Bickelman, FSC student and MassPIRG volunteer, said, "it's important to have a say in who represents our country...especially if you don't like who's in office. Our voted have an impact on elections." She further explained, "It's my right as a citizen, so why wouldn't I take advantage of my right to vote?"

Not every student shares Bickelman's outlook on voting, however. FSC student, Eric Smith was asked of his opinion on voting prior to our recent election. He said he wasn't planning to vote. "I don't know that much about the election and I don't want to make an uninformed decision," Smith said. "I

don't really agree with either platform. I'll probably vote in the next election when I plan to be more informed."

FSC student Jen Kelly has the same outlook. "I don't think either party would benefit the United States," Kelly said.

Although MassPIRG volunteers frequently may come across students who don't feel the need to vote, they will continue their tasks.

As indicated in the MassPIRG pamphlet, "throughout history, students have been at the forefront of change, because we have the idealism, the resources and the time to commit to reshaping our society."

The Fitchburg State College Newspaper 160 Pearl Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420

The Point considers for publication letters to the editor on any topic of interest to the Fitchburg State College community. All submissions run at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief and are subject to editing for style and length.

All articles must be typed or legibly handwritten and include a name and a phone number, in case of questions.

Announcements should be short, including dates, places, times, and a contact person.

The content of any article labeled Opinion, does not necessarily represent the views of The Point, its staff, or Fitchburg State College

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FSC photo

People in sunglasses, hats and hoodies gamble big money on cards.

Poker: Deal us in!

BY SARA PIERCE
STAFF REPORTER

From Old West saloons to modern-day basement parties, poker has long been a part of American culture. It's always been easy to picture, too: a bunch of older guys around a table, beer bottles in hand, squinting at their cards through clouds of tobacco smoke.

That picture has changed in the past couple of years, though, as poker has hit the mainstream.

Now, everyone seems to be coming to the table. Poker tournaments are drawing big ratings for ESPN, the Travel Channel, and Bravo, with celebrity poker pitting Ricki Lake against Macaulay Culkin, and Angela Bassett against Dave Navarro.

College students are going online to play Texas Hold'em, and many college dorms are transformed into poker parlors on Saturday nights.

Casinos, including Connecticut's Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun, have also noticed the pick-up in poker demand. At least one Las Vegas casino has reported a 50 percent increase in poker traffic in the past year.

With an estimated 50 million Americans taking a gamble on the game, charity poker has become the new rage at a variety of local clubs and organizations.

Playing for the love of the game while helping a non-profit organization, citizens come together for tournaments and casino nights across New England with profits ranging from \$6,000 to \$12,000 per tournament.

"It's a lot better than selling candy bars," said charity-poker organizer Art Phillips.

Members of the Ayer Rotary Club would be likely to agree. This group held a Texas Hold'em tournament that attracted more than 100 players to the Bull Run Restaurant in Shirley last month, earning thou-

sands of dollars to benefit Loaves and Fishes.

Because gaming is only legal in casinos, owners of the establishments where the games are held are not allowed to accept profits associated with the gaming. Here at Fitchburg State College, residence hall policies and procedures state specifically, "The playing of cards or any other game of skill or chance for money or other items of value is prohibited." Does that mean FSC students have decided to pass on the poker craze?

"There is just as much poker as there is underage drinking," said Troy, a junior at FSC.

Students are forming clubs, joining tournaments and going online to get in on the game. There is even an online College Poker Championship, with games held on Sunday afternoons; students compete for \$100,000 in scholarships and a chance to play in the finals in Cancun, Mexico in the spring.

Defense dominant in newest Madden

From Page 1

Some of the other things that keep Madden sitting on top of the throne come in franchise mode, which is deeper than ever, with new features such as player morale and storyline central.

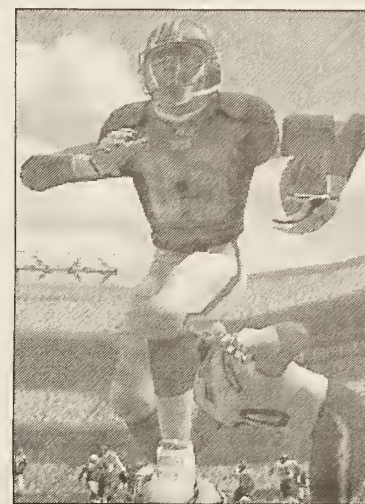
Player morale allows you to check a players feelings about the organization, which in turn affects how he plays on the field. Keep your players happy with a healthy paycheck and plenty of playing time or they might not want to keep playing for you.

Also, storyline central allows you to read up on all of the local and national news from the NFL in newspapers, e-mail, and even Tony Bruno's weekly radio show.

Controlling the players and your team has become even more intricate and the options are seemingly endless.

During the game, new hot route systems have been added for the defense. Before the snap of the ball you can adjust your pass coverage, send your linebackers on a blitz, or slant your line-man left, right. To counter these defensive shifts, offensive formation change has been added. While on offense a formation change can be achieved without changing the play, to pick up a blitzing linebacker or create mismatches in the secondary.

The last major improvement Madden has brought to the table is the new defensive "hit stick", while using the hit stick, a defensive player will tackle the



EA Sports

EA Sports Madden 2005

offensive player with a greater impact, which will cause more fumbles. Your chance of making the tackle is decreased if your angle is off, however.

Graphics haven't changed from 2004, while Xbox can be credited with the best graphics over PlayStation2 and the GameCube which are less detailed.

Furthermore, the sounds of Madden are generally the same but with some new commentator phrases and the radio track additions from John Madden and Al Micheals. The variety, however, is limited. After extensive usage of the game it can become redundant and even annoying.

Madden 2005 is online compatible for Xbox and PS2. This allows you to play other online users over the Internet; otherwise, it is a one-to-four player game.

Madden is rated E for everyone but the game play takes hours pf practice to master, so it wouldn't be enjoyable for people who are looking for something they can just dive into like Pac Man or Asteroids.

Interested in writing for The Point?

Stop by The Point Office

Tuesday or Thursday between 12:30 - 3:30

Fitchburg State College archives expanded

COREY O'DONNELL
STAFF REPORTER

Recent news of the Fitchburg State College library's expansion of the archives might have some book-worms wondering just what these prized collections are and who cares for them.

Materials in the archives were used to help plan the inauguration of President Antonucci, [and] provided Tom Battinelli with historical images to illustrate his recent book.

Memo sent to the FSC faculty

Library Director Bob Foley and archivist Janis Oullette, are responsible for the day-to-day duties including the maintenance, storage, and exhibiting of the vast collection of archival materials.

So, what are archives?

They are special collections of "books, manuscripts, and college materials including the enabling documents of FSC, early college catalogs, yearbooks, and newspapers" said Oullette.

The archives document unaccounted hours of research and study; also they offer a chance to dig deep into history and experience days of the past. First formed in 1981, the FSC archives have grown extensively, and have become the primary resource for research on two award-winning authors, R.A. Salvatore and Robert Cormier.

From original tests



FSC photo

Old copies of *The Strobe*, *The Probe* and *The Point* can be found in the expanded archives. Below: The library.

and sample stories capturing the trials and tribulations of their writing potential, to first edition copies of their works or fan mail by the box load, everyone has the opportunity to make memories as they sift through these collections.

In addition to authors' manuscripts, the archives carry "books designated special that contain early local histories, city materials, city directories, and faculty publications," added Oullette.

A tour of these special publications reveals maps of the surrounding area as it was years and years ago, classic anthologies of Fitchburg life as it were, and much more to fuel anyone's mental fires.

The archives also include a collection featuring an official repository of college materials including faculty records, Academic Affairs, and student publications - such as earlier issues of the *Point*.

Students can use this facility to research past events held on campus, as well as those in the city of Fitchburg.

"Materials in the archives were used to help

plan the inauguration of President Antonucci, provided Tom Battinelli with historical images to illustrate his recent book, and provided other historical classroom pictures to a BU doctoral student whose dissertation we just received," Oullette noted in a memo sent to the FSC faculty this fall.

The ability to maintain these documents involve two key steps that Oullette, as an archivist, must follow: processing and indexing.

Processing can be a lengthy ordeal involving the removal of any and all materials that may rust, such as binding staples, and replacing them with plastic clips for safe keeping. Once clipped they are placed into acid-free folders and confined in storage closets to prevent molds and other decomposers from wearing down the literature.

Indexing is the final procedure involved in maintaining an archival collection. An index is "a finding aid wherein catalogued items can be easily retrieved," Oullette said. She continued her mes-

sage by simply stating, "With archival materials, indexing matters."

The ease of use inherent of any archives relies upon the ability of its staff to keep a consistent and precise record of all documentation, as well as clues to its whereabouts within the facility.

Janis Oullette's passion for her work can easily be recognized by anyone who expresses an interest in her job. Archivists rely upon clerical skills, historical perspective, and patience that would make Buddhists bow - traits Janis Oullette exudes.

Her final comments were one that many public institutions could understand: the need for further financial assistance for her archives and the reallocating of library funds to expand and enhance the archives in the future.

Tours of the archives are available upon request. If you plan on visiting the archives, you can contact Janis Oullette by asking for her at the library's information desk, or by visiting her on the second floor.



Library changes policies

Restrictions placed on food, cell phones

BOB FOLEY
LIBRARY DIRECTOR

I hope most of you have noticed the new furniture and the new carpeting on the 1st floor as well as the configurations for the library's public work stations. With an understanding and financing from the president's office, the library staff has adopted a plan to make everyone more comfortable in using the library space. We received our first shipment in July and our second shipment arrived on Nov. 26. Carpeting on the 1st floor was replaced during the January break. Room 203 and the 2nd floor entrance will be completed on the weekends.

To this end, the library staff is analyzing some of our current public use policies and have decided to reemphasize them and in some cases adopt new ones.

We have looked at the food and beverage policy, we adopted a cell phone policy and a filming in the Library policy. Next semester we hope to designate some quiet areas.

We realize it is a convenience to have fast food services in the building and in the past we have looked away when students brought in the Whoppers, the pocket sandwiches, and the french fries, etc. However we can't do that anymore.

Food and Beverages

The library staff has established food and beverage guidelines to aid in the

preservation and care of library materials and electronic equipment, to maintain a pest-free environment and damage free furnishings, to reduce litter, and to ensure a safe, clean environment

Food and drink in the Gallucci-Cirio Library are limited as follows:

"The only food brought into the Library should be of the quick snack variety. Exceptions are: staff areas, the CIC Library, and special events. Drinks are allowed in spill proof, covered containers only. Food and beverages are not allowed in the following locations: the public computers, Special Collections and Archives, and the Library Classroom. Carry out what you carry in."

Cell phones are a terrific piece of equipment. However, the ringing and the talking is another man's poison. What is convenient to one is an annoyance to others. So, just as numerous other service areas such as restaurants, classroom, meeting, etc. have asked people to turn off their phones, the library will also be doing the same.

Cell Phones

Patrons are asked to turn off cell phones, audible pagers and similar devices when entering the Gallucci-Cirio Library. Patrons are asked to set cell phones to "vibrate" when entering. Patrons using cell phones will be asked to leave the Library for the duration of their call.

The College is fortunate to have an active Communications department. Assignments include filming, directing, lighting, etc, and filming has been done in the library. The Library policy is to have students ask permission and provide set dates before filming.

Filming/Photography Policy

Filming and the photography of the library facilities, personnel or patrons must be arranged with the Director. Requests should include information regarding the desired date, location within the Library, type of equipment being used, etc. It is also requested that proper credit be given to the Library in the credits. If people are being filmed or photographed, the appropriate paperwork must be completed according to college policy.

Finally, the library staff believes it is essential to remind all our users that your research is private and is no one else's business. Librarians consider it an ethical component of our profession. Therefore the library staff will strive to "protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted."

The confidentiality statement will provide the policy statement and the procedures we follow.

The policies can be found at the library web site <http://www.fsc.edu/library/aboutus.html>

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The perfect gift

It's no 'Secret' what girls want and what they don't want

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY
STAFF REPORTER

This holiday season now brings us Valentine's Day, a wonderful time to spend with loved ones.

Or if you find yourself in a relationship with a young lady, it is a period of near constant unrest due to your inability to come up with even a remotely good gift idea.

But fret no longer my fellow male brethren, for American commerce has answered our call. Many stores have now established "gift advisors."

With their aid, we the customer, will hopefully be able to find that ever-elusive "perfect gift" (a gift often talked about or hinted at, but never adequately acknowledged).

One such store that has brought in the help of these advisors is Filene's in Brockton, a store more affordable for your average college student.

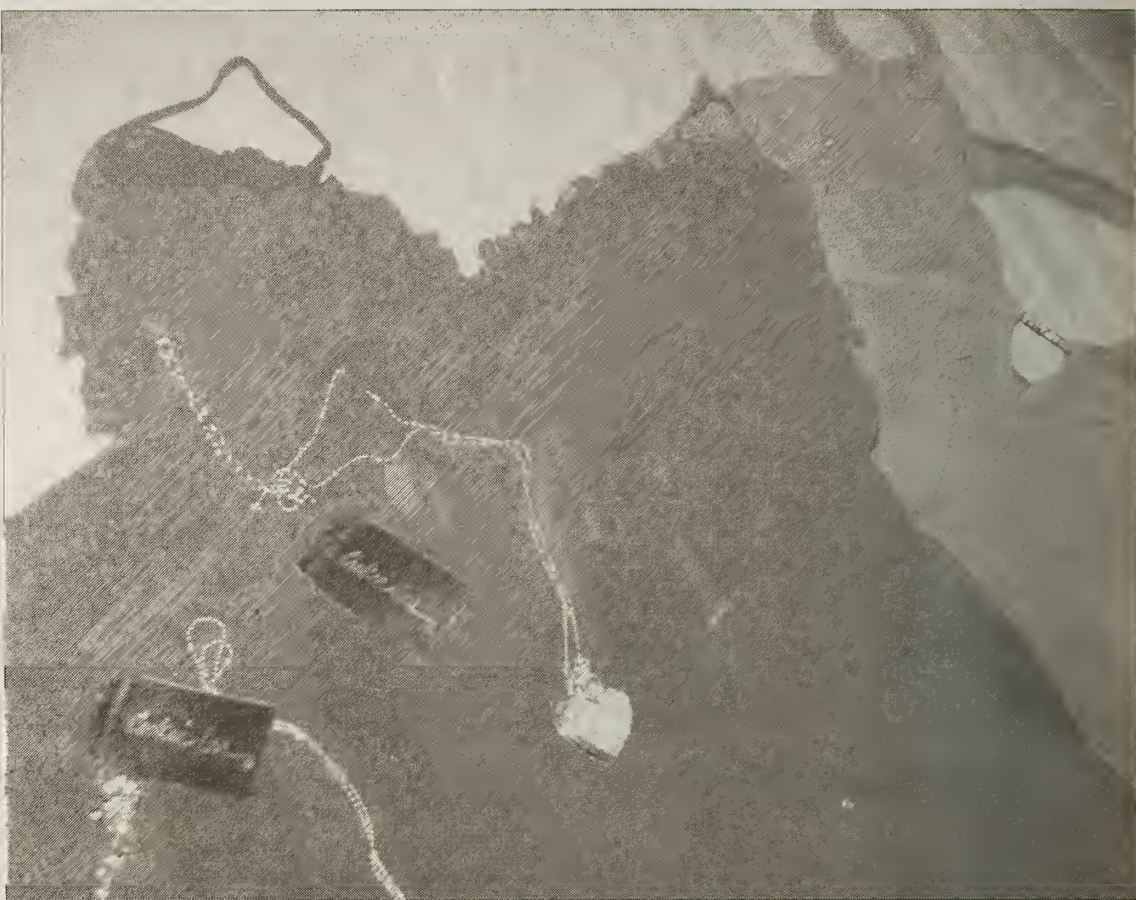
"Not an hour goes by than a panicked, college-aged

male comes up to me..., nearly on his knees begging for my advice," explained Kristin Hacker, a gift adviser at the Brockton Filene's.

However, remember that gift advisers are not the only people to turn to in these trying times; friends, family, as well as people on the street are all capable of providing hapless gift-givers with quality advice.

"The biggest problem I've had with boyfriends is that they think they have to get some big, expensive and nearly thoughtless gift when all I'd really like is something thoughtful. Cheap or expensive, it doesn't matter, the thought would go a long way!" says Jessica Bernard, a 21-year-old "distressed gift-receiver."

It is important to remember, ladies, no one is trying to give some horrible gift. Sometimes finding the perfect gift is just difficult. No one is trying to give the trash compactor, or the bowling ball, or the golf clubs. Sometimes during the process of ideas, other ideas



FSC photo

Diamonds may be a girl's best friend but lingerie can sometimes suffice.

become intertwined with the first and you end up with these kinds of gifts.

"The key is to pay attention to what your significant other says or does during these times. Anything could be a clue to the perfect gift, making you look like the perfect boyfriend," Hacker further explains.

That's right! There is a glimmer of hope! There have been success stories. Out there, amongst us all, walking the streets, are men who have stepped up and answered the call. Out there, there are men who have found the perfect gift.

"One year, my girlfriend's watch broke... so I got her a watch. I knew her favorite color was purple so I got her a watch with a purple face," says the brilliant Nico Micheals, a 20-year-old college student.

Opportunity came knocking, and he answered the door.

"I was dating this girl who always chewed

Winterfresh gum, but would chew all different flavors of Winterfresh, she could never decide on one favorite. So about an hour before I was supposed to see her, an idea popped into my head. I bought about 30, maybe 40 packs of Winterfresh gum. I put them all in a gift basket and made it look nice. She loved it. She thought it was funny, cute and thoughtful," explains an equally brilliant mind, Thomas Smith, a 19-year-old college student.

Think small! These two noticed an insignificant fact about their beloved and pounced on it, leading to what was probably a very happy holiday for both of them.

Don't just settle for the cutest teddy with chocolates in the Valentine's day aisle at Wal-mart. Chances are, she already saw it there! But maybe not. If you can't resist the convenient teddy bear package, maybe buy her favorite candy and present the bear with that instead or

as well. Favorite things are an easy chance to get personal with your gift.

"At the end of the day, there is no one perfect gift for all girls everywhere," Hacker said. "In fact, it might be better to stay away from what all girls are supposed to adore and sway more towards something that shows you have been listening to the little things she says. Be willing to be creative, be willing to be sweet and possibly come off as mushy, and most importantly, think, think think! If you do those things, you should be fine! Most girls aren't looking to come down on you for your lack of creativity, they just want to feel that you care about them. So show them you do."

That is seemingly simple advice, but it is advice that countless men everywhere often ignore. Take it! Take this advice and run with it. For it may be a great asset to you in avoiding a very cold and bitter winter.



FSC photo

How original? Another stuffed animal.

Can't stop shopping until you're dropping?

BY LEAH DENNIS
STAFF REPORTER

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, people are starting to head to the stores to get something for that special someone. Don't worry, because soon the big day will be over, the last chocolates consumed, back to normal—unless you are Shannon T. Montgomery.

Montgomery is a self-proclaimed/diagnosed shopaholic, and also a senior at Fitchburg State College. Montgomery is one of 1 to 6 percent of the U.S. population that identifies themselves as shopaholics, or oniomanics.

"You know it's a problem when you're \$3,000 in credit card debt, no job, and you still manage to go shopping a few times a week," says Montgomery.

A shopaholic isn't just someone who likes to shop till they drop; a shopaholic is a person with a preoccupation with buying or shopping that can cause stress, is time-consuming, interferes with everyday life and can lead to financial problems. Montgomery fits into all of these categories. She will shop at the very least three times a week for hours at a time, and she is slowly paying off several maxed-out credit cards.

"I get really antsy during the day because I get bored easily. So I always go shopping. Even if I don't buy anything it makes my day feel complete if I just go and look."

Montgomery is one of the few who recognizes

her problem and is receiving help for it. April Lane Benson, author of "I Shop Therefore I am," writes on her website, www.stoppin-govershopping.com, "It is unusual for a patient to refer themselves to treatment." Benson is a therapist who specializes in "over-spenders." Treatment for over-spending is usually one-to-one therapy or group therapy, also medication, but Montgomery chose a 12-step support group called Debtor's Anonymous. Groups like Debtor's Anonymous have an open-door policy for anyone who wants to come and participate or just listen.

"I go to meetings once or twice a week and I'm working on getting my life out of debt and back to normal," says Montgomery, "I know I would have never gone if my mom hadn't stepped in and pretty much made me go. But now that my cards have been cut and I go to these meetings, I see how bad I had gotten and can work on staying away from the things that used to set me off."

Part of the program is keeping a journal of spending habits or urges to shop. The group focuses on triggers that can bring on the behavior, internal power of the group, and discovering how media and our culture influence us.

"I try to keep busy during certain hours of the day when I used to go shopping, since boredom was my trigger," explains Montgomery.

Benson believes that shopping is a learned behavior we discover when we are

children. When parents present kids with gifts, the gifts are associated with pleasure and money, therefore giving the child an expectation of pleasure from spending money. Dr. Benson says on her website that the problem is "intensified by the plague of materialism and over-consumption." She also acknowledges over-shopping as a serious problem.

"Any habit that brings pleasure can be dangerous, if you can't stop yourself from doing it."

Benson proposes the "typical" compulsive buyer as the stereotypical thirty something female who urges to buy clothing, jewelry and cosmetics but does not restrict the problem to just women. Men like to shop too.

Montgomery unfortunately falls into this stereotype headfirst and about a decade too early. "I probably started my habit when I was 16, because I was getting a paycheck, had a car, and had freedom and nothing to do. I would usually go to Wal-mart because there was something there that I would think I needed then I would end up leaving the store with a full cart."

Wal-mart, a multi-billion dollar company seems to have that affect on many of their shoppers. The company's success is an example of the "American plague of materialism." One department store commercial claims to have "everything you need." Since when did everything one needs to be happy end up inside a shopping mall?

Do you Ebay?

BY JILL MOCCIO
STAFF REPORTER

A couple of clicks of the trusty old mouse and you are on some of the hottest websites for browsing and shopping for new and used products.

Ordering merchandise online is taking the nation by storm. I asked many online shoppers about their views of Ebay, Amazon, and other major websites where there is a deal to be made. It's fast and convenient.

"I'm too busy working 40-50 hours a week to plan the next trip to the mall or neighborhood store," said Christina Rice of Agawam.

This 22 year-old manager of a local hair salon and day spa was quick to tell me that turning on her television in her pajamas was more comfortable than walking around a crowded store. That is what our country is coming to. The demand for online shopping is at an all-time high. How else can you drink your coffee, watch your favorite sitcom, and order a living room set at the same time?

"I'm a DJ at local college bars and getting all the newest in music is a must. I have to have the most updated equipment as well and online shopping is the fastest way to do so. The deals are there and the convenience is incredible," said TJ Powers of Holden.

The only other place he will go for records and equipment is in Rhode Island and that just isn't a possibility every weekend.

Many of us newcomers to the craze of Ebay are skeptical about placing our credit card numbers online. For many it can be scary and seem risky to punch in a

number that could backfire at anytime and withdraw hundreds or thousands of dollars on merchandise they'll never see.

Those people can rest easy. Shopping online is not only fun but it is quite safe if you monitor your transactions.

Certain websites such as Amazon, or Ebay and the newest to explode on the world wide web, Overstock.com, are some of the safest places to shop. Everything can be found, your money is well taken care of, and your item will be shipped out within days or even hours of your purchase.

"Usually, I'll buy something on Monday and by Friday it is in my mailbox waiting for me," said Rice. "I work hard for my money and I realize that there are risks I may be taking but the best thing I can say is to be smart about each and every website you visit."

Ebay is one websites for buying and selling merchandise. Overstock.com is a great place to find beautiful pieces of furniture or decorative pieces that are sold for 60-80 percent off what the retailer would sell them for. How could they possibly do this you ask? Easy, the retailers are stocked with an abundance of products which are then given to this website company where they are able to sell them to customers for a much cheaper price. Some items are discontinued or are items that have been returned by customers for some reason or another, but the treasure hunt is the best part.

Shopping for yourself is supposed to be a treat and not a chore. Online shopping has brought the fun back into anyone and everyone's shopping experience.

Fall in love with 'Garden State'

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY
STAFF REPORTER

I wanted to run out of the movie theatres and go fall in love.

Few movies inspire such a feeling, but "Garden State" was able to do just that.

If you did not see it in theaters, it won't be difficult for you to find. Thanks to the wildly popular world of DVD's, "Garden State" has been out since Dec. 28. Even if you did see "Garden State" in the theaters, or already own the DVD, there couldn't be a better time to see it again than now, with Cupid floating around with his love arrows as Valentine's Day approaches.

At its core, "Garden

State" tells a story we have seen thousands of times before: it's a tale of two young people falling in love. Yet, it is much more than just that. In this film we follow Andrew "Large" Largeman, portrayed by Zach Braff ("Scrubs"), through four days in his childhood home in New Jersey. "Large" had been made numb to the world through years of prescription drug use. Upon meeting Sam, played by Natalie Portman ("Star Wars"), he begins to truly live life for the first time in years. All the while these two characters are accompanied by Mark, portrayed by Peter Sarsgaard ("Shattered Glass").

Unlike your average movie depicting two characters falling in love, this movie presents the characters and

their situations in a realistic, but still unusual fashion. To go into further detail describing specific moments would rob future viewers of what is in store for them.

College students can relate especially well to this movie, since it was made by a twenty-something-year-old. The architect of this movie is writer, director, and leading man, Braff. He wrote this movie as an average 26-year-old male before achieving stardom on the television show "Scrubs." People of his generation can see themselves in the shoes of the characters depicted on screen. For me, movies that can do that have always proved to be the most powerful and most enjoyable.

However, this is not a movie that can only be enjoyed by those in their 20s. It shows a man discovering who he wants to be, what is important, and how to treat those important things. These themes are ones which all age groups can relate to.

"Garden State" can lead its audience to think about life in a whole new light. There are a lot of good movies, a lot of bad movies, and a few great movies, but there are even fewer movies which can leave its audience feeling a sort of new insight.

Braff's ability to imagine and create such effective characters is what lays the groundwork for what such an amazing movie. Braff presents his dream which



'Garden State' DVD

began on a piece of paper and ended up on the big screen.

Natalie Portman provides a spark to the otherwise dull life of Andrew "Large" Largeman. Rounding out the trio is Peter Sarsgaard playing the role of Mark, a friend of "Large" in high school.

A must-see movie: 'The Ring'

BY REBECCA ROTCHFORD
STAFF REPORTER

"You don't want to hurt anyone," said Dr. Scott.

"But I do, and I'm sorry. It won't stop," said the character responsible for the deaths of numerous people in the 2002 horror movie "The Ring."

The Ring Two is currently in post-production stage, and is set to be released sometime this year.

Director Gore Verbinski created a chilling and eerily produced film about a mysterious video that is in some way related to the deaths of four teenagers. One of the victims was Katie Embry (played by Amber Tamblyn), who happened to be the niece of journalist Rachel Keller (played by Niomi Watts). Katie's death motivated Rachel

to do some investigating into its unknown cause.

The plot of the movie unfolds from that point, leaving the audience guessing throughout the entire film. Verbinski masterfully creates a suspenseful and thrilling ride without following the typical horror movie conventions.

The opening of the movie is comparable to the popular Scream movies. Most of those movies began at a female's home, with the audience knowing that she will become a victim minutes later. In "The Ring," Katie and her best friend Becca (played by Rachel Bella) are seen at Katie's house giggling and joking around. Katie tells Becca about her weekend with her boyfriend and explains about a creepy cabin in the woods. She tells the story of a weird video

that they watched, and of receiving a phone call immediately afterwards in which the caller whispered "seven days." She continues to explain about the urban legend that seven days after watching the video, any viewer of it will die. As the scene unfolds, Katie plays a trick on Becca pretending that she's dying. But a few minutes later the eerie music begins signaling that the real horror is about to begin.

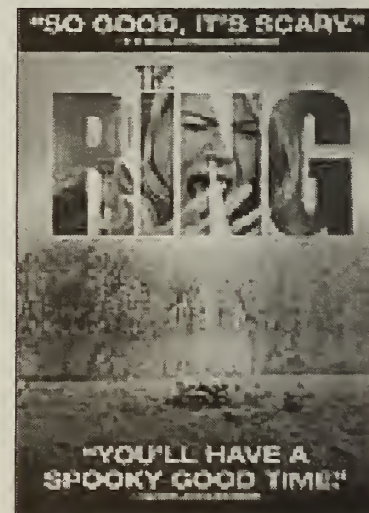
At this point, you think you're watching a typical horror film, but then Verbinski takes the film into another direction. There's no creepy stalker making phone calls, and there's no one at the front door. Instead, standing in the kitchen, Katie hears her television turn on to show snowy fuzz. She thinks its Becca trying to trick her but the musical score hints otherwise. The television takes on a life of

its own when it continues on, even after Katie unplugged it.

Within the next sequence of shots Becca opens the closet door upstairs, which has a pool of water leaking from it. She surprisingly finds Katie dead on the floor, with her face grossly discolored and disfigured.

After learning about her niece's death, Rachel begins to investigate the circumstances of the deaths of her and three friends who also spent the weekend at the cabin. Especially since Rachel's young son Aiden (played by David Dorfman) seems to be reacting strangely to Katie's mysterious death.

Aside from the storyline of the film, Verbinski also creates a beautifully picturesque, and at the same time disconcerting film. Many of the scenes have an eerie red or



'The Ring' DVD

greenish tone, which effectively adds to the creepiness. The sound effects also enhance the scary feeling the film provokes.

"The Ring" is a remake of the Japanese film Ringu, but Verbinski does an exceptional job at making the film unique.

The Ring is PG-13 and runs for 115 minutes. The screenplay was written by Ehren Kruger, and is based on the novel by Koji Suzuki.

Oscar buzz surrounds 'Ray'

BY JOSH FARNSWORTH
STAFF REPORTER

If you happen to run into Jamie Foxx this week, you'll have to speak above that deafening humming noise. After his sparkling performance in the new movie "Ray," there is a great deal of Oscar buzz surrounding him.

"Ray" depicts the life and music of the groundbreaking recording artist Ray Charles Robison. This biography runs the emotional gamut that takes the audience through the sometimes-turbulent, always-intriguing rise of a musical legend.

The dramatic events in his story- witnessing the tragic death of his kid brother, adjusting to blindness, to life on the road, to corruptive 'friends' around him, to the racially-charged climate of the South in the 1960's, to an intense drug addiction, to chart-topping genius, "Ray" is not only a story, but an epic tale of passion for music and a struggle to overcome. As a result, audiences will have the chance to see Foxx's career rise to new heights- perhaps even as high as the acceptance podium at the Academy Awards.

Foxx ("Collateral," "Any Given Sunday") is nearly flawless in his uncanny resemblance and portrayal of Charles. From his unmistakable head gyrations to his smooth manipulation of the piano to his ear-to-ear smile, Foxx pulls off the ultimate achievement in character replication. At times, you honestly forget it is Jamie Foxx behind the signature black shades. After spending the last couple of years with Ray Charles himself, Foxx, who is a classically trained



Jamie Foxx plays Ray Charles, shown here at the keyboards during a concert, in the new movie "Ray."

pianist, was able to get a better insight into the character he would simulate on the silver screen.

"I am a human Polaroid," Foxx said in an interview with Bob Longino of Cox News Service. "I have a kind of photographic memory, and when I absorb somebody, it comes real quick. If I was taking in the Ray Charles I was meeting, the result would have been me playing an older man. I had to find the younger Ray Charles."

Unfortunately, the real Ray Charles never saw the finished product, as he passed away last year from liver failure.

Perhaps the only flaw in Foxx's performance would be his overshadowing of an extremely solid cast. Kerry Washington ("Save the Last Dance," "The Human Stain") plays Bea, Charles' strong-willed wife who is emotionally jarring at points. Regina King ("Friday," "Enemy of the State") also gives a quality performance as the tortured Margie Hendricks, Charles' backup singer and lover, who tries desperately to become the

one woman in Ray's life. Others include Richard Schiff ("West Wing") and Aunjanue Ellis ("Undercover Brother," "Men of Honor") who plays a fiery backup singer named Mary Anne. These cast members help complete the vision of director Taylor Hackford ("An officer and a Gentleman" and "Devil's advocate").

Although the focus on Charles' drug addiction is crucial to the film, it tends to be the center of attention for too long. Outside of that, "Ray" delivers as one of the most triumphant stories this year at the box office. Do yourself a favor and find a theater with a crisp surround-system. If you've never heard such classics as Georgia on My Mind and I Got a Woman, go just for the sultry soundtrack. If Ray Charles' music is not your thing, go just for the incomparable Jamie Foxx. A buzz has never sounded this soulful. It gets 9.8 out of 10.

"Ray" is rated PG-13 with a running time of 2 hours and 33 minutes. It is a presentation of Universal Pictures.

'Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West'

BY MICHELLE YANG
STAFF REPORTER

Does evil really exist? Do people really mean to be evil, do they simply believe that the end justifies the means? Gregory McGuire's book "Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West" explores these questions. After reading Wicked, Frank S. Baum's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz will never seem the same to you. The simple story of a little girl from Kansas takes on a new spin when it is told from the witch's point of view. In McGuire's version, it is a story of love, betrayal, as well as the fight against political injustice.

Elphaba, the green-skinned girl who will later be known as the Wicked With of the West, is born into a preacher's family. Her father believes that her green skin is the unnamed god's punishment for an evil deed he had unknowingly committed. People stay away from her and think that she is cursed. When she attends Shiz University, she is made fun of until Glinda, a rich and popular girl, befriends her. Elphaba tries to fight for animal rights because she believes that animals can talk and are just as intelligent as the humans. She says that they shouldn't have their rights taken away just because they are animals. Because of her beliefs, she eventually

becomes an outlaw working against the Wizard of Oz.

Elphaba is generally looked upon as an evil person because she tried to kill Dorothy and her companions. But there was a misunderstanding: Elphaba thought that Dorothy had come to kill her, when Dorothy had actually come to apologize for accidentally killing Elphaba's sister. Because of this, Elphaba sends creature after creature to destroy Dorothy and her companions.

Rumors had been circulating throughout Oz telling how the Wizard had commanded her to kill Elphaba. Also, Dorothy has Elphaba's sister's shoes, and Elphaba really wants them back. Those shoes were promised to her by her sister and she thought it was unfair of Dorothy to have killed her sister and to have taken the shoes as well. At first Elphaba just wanted to get the desired shoes, but when she couldn't get them, she got angry and wanted Dorothy dead. She thought that Dorothy was out to kill her as well, and she didn't want Dorothy to have the satisfaction of getting that chance.

Gregory McGuire's book is a great novel where you can judge for yourself whether or not evil really does exist. This amazing story shows every human's weakness no matter their skin color through love, commitment, and justice.

McCormack on track in Cyclocross

SAM SMITH
STAFF REPORTER

Mark McCormack stands modestly in the parking lot of the Pineland Farms School in New Gloucester, Maine. Every so often someone will walk by and congratulate him on his great performance earlier in the day. He thanks them and goes back to packing his two bikes and all his gear into his car.

About an hour earlier, McCormack won the Elite men's race in the downeast cyclocross that was held at the school. This was the first of seven races in the Verge New England Cyclocross Championship Series. McCormack is the reigning champion of this series and looks to be right on track for this year as well.

"Today's race in New Gloucester went very well for me," said McCormack. "I led from the first minute of the race until I crossed the finish line an hour later. I really liked the course. It was fast, it was technical, a little mud, a lot of wind, and a pretty hard run up."

The sport of cyclocross originated in northern Europe when road bike racers needed a way to keep their fitness through winter. Since the roads were too slick, they would take their road bikes over fields and meadows. When their feet became too cold for them to tolerate, they would jump off their bikes and run for a while. From there it developed into a whole new kind of racing.

"Cyclocross is a very unique sport," McCormack added. "It's a combination of road biking, mountain biking, and steeple chase running. We



Verge photo

Mark McCormack raises his hand in victory after crossing the finish line in the first of seven races in the Verge New England Cyclocross Championship Series

race on a bike that looks like a road bike. We race on pavement. We race on grass, in the mud, and sand. We have to dismount and get over some wooden barriers. Sometimes the hills are so steep we have to put our bikes on our shoulders and run up the hill."

He has been racing cyclocross since 1985 which makes this his twentieth competitive season.

"I started because I was racing road at the time and it seemed like everyone in New England raced 'cross. It was what I wanted to do and what everyone else was doing. It's been a natural progression since then," said McCormack.

McCormack has won numerous National titles over

the years as a cyclocross racer. He also acts as a mentor to many young and up and coming racers. One of his disciples, 20 year old Jesse Anthony, scored a second place in New Gloucester with only his coach in front of him. Jesse is also the reigning National champion in the under 23 category. McCormack has been passing down his years of experience to help Anthony become one of the next generation of great cyclocross racers in the U.S.

When asked about what his goals for this season were, Jesse said, "I'd like to win the U.S. Grand Prix series in the under 23 category, and also make the podium in the overall for the for the New England series. Then I'd like to go to World

Championships and finish my season in Europe like I usually do."

McCormack also has some pretty ambitious goals for the season.

"My goals for 2004 are to win the New England series, win the U.S. Grand Prix series, and win Nationals. Three pretty lofty goals, but I've committed myself to training hard and race with a lot of focus this year. Achieving any of those three goals would be pretty impressive, so I'd be happy with that," said McCormack.

Mark will be racing just about every weekend from now until the middle of December. Stories about each race can be found at cyclocrossworld.com.

Falcons fall to Salem State

STAFF REPORT

SALEM, MA — Salem State used a 38-11 advantage in bench scoring to post a hard-fought 80-76 MASCAC victory over visiting Fitchburg State Saturday afternoon.

The tightly contested game featured 17 lead changes and 11 ties.

Taylor Janedy and Meghan DePasty each scored 12 points in reserve roles for the Lady Vikings (14-6, 5-2 MASCAC) who with the win, remained a half game behind Bridgewater State and Worcester State.

Salem, which took a 33-32 advantage into the locker room at halftime, also had three starters crack double digits.

Junior center Estrella Kuilan registered 16 points while Kelli Reardon chipped in with 12 points and Gillian Almeida added 10 points, 7 rebounds and 5 assists.

Fitchburg State had six players score in double figures led by junior Katie Redican who scored a game-high 19 points, including four 3-pointers. Classmate Jen Fontaine registered 12 points, 11 rebounds, 6 assists and 5 steals while senior Samantha Sweeney tallied 12 points and grabbed a season-high 12 boards.

J.J. Kirkland scored 12 points and gobbled up 9 rebounds for the Falcons (15-4, 5-3 MASCAC) who with the loss, is now one game out of the conference lead.

Cortney Kelly netted 10 points while dealing out a career-best equaling 7 assists and D'Yana Delperio came off the bench and amassed 10 points for FSC.

Weekly Horoscopes

<http://www.astrology-online.com/horo.htm>

ARIES (Mar. 21- April 20)

Put your efforts into moneymaking ventures. This is probably causing upset and confusion on the home front. Drastic changes regarding your personal attitude are evident. Problems with in-laws or relatives may be more damaging than you realize.

Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

TAURUS (Apr. 21- may 21)

You can meet new and exciting friends who will provide mental stimulation. Romance will develop through work related activities. Your determination and sheer desire to do your own thing will be successful. Your sensitivity toward those you love will capture their hearts.

Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21)

Expand your knowledge and sign up for courses and seminars. Don't overspend to impress others. You will easily blow situations out of proportion. Be tactful if you see flaws in someone else's work.

Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

You can learn valuable information if you listen and observe what others are doing and saying. Use your high energy and dynamic approach to win favors from superiors. Travel will be exciting.

Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

LEO (July 23-Aug 22)

Spend time getting to know each other. Although up setting, changes in your domestic sit-

uation will be favorable. Relatives will be cordial. You'll have amazing ideas, but superiors may try to block your attempts at implementing them.

Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 -Sept. 23)

The stamina you possess will be apparent in your approach to your hobbies and creative projects. Use some diplomacy to get your point across delicately. Travel will be in your best interest regardless of whether it is business or pleasure. Expect some flak.

Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 -Oct. 23)

Efforts made to improve yourself will turn out to your satisfaction. Plan your social events carefully. Don't get intimately involved with a coworker. Your fun loving approach will be admired and appreciated by others.

Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

You will be able to work with fine detail this week. Opportunities for travel and socializing are evident. You may need the space, but you need the extra cash more. Try not to spend too much on children or entertainment.

Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 -Dec. 21)

Pleasure trips or friendly get-togethers will be satisfying and intellectually stimulating. You should not get involved in joint ventures. Sit back. You will have good ideas for home improvement projects.

Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22.- Jan. 20)

You will find yourself tied to the phone. Try to be reasonable. Your courage and willpower will enable you to get rid of destructive habits as well. Family responsibilities are escalating.

Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 -Feb. 19)

Try not to lend or borrow money this week. You'll be an emotional basket case. Don't take any comments too seriously. You may want to make drastic changes concerning your personal partner.

Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

PISCES (Feb. 20-Mar. 20)

Don't hesitate to enlist the aid of friends or family if you have a big project to finish in your domestic environment. You may find that you are a little lucky this week. Strong willpower will come to your rescue. Just be yourself.

Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

Fun Puzzle of the Week



© Ken Egan - sw1001

Stackaword

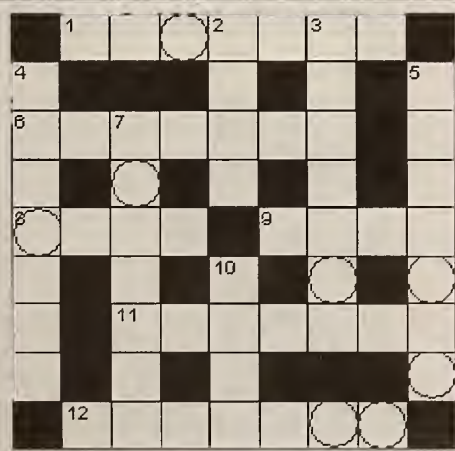
Each half of this puzzle has words of increasing length.

Each word is an anagram of the previous smaller word plus one additional letter.

ACROSS

- 1 Very skilled person
- 2 Forefathers
- 3 Continuous dull pain
- 4 Forebear
- 5 Pains
- 6 Member of a senate
- 7 Self-supporting structures

- 8 Makes amends
- 9 Attains
- 10 Make amends
- 11 Investigate
- 12 Great age
- 13 Horse bred for racing
- 14 Single unit



CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Improvement
- 6 Of African descent
- 8 Tramp
- 9 Passport endorsement
- 11 Altar boy
- 12 Seacoast

DOWN

- 2 Speed contest
- 3 Compactness
- 4 Timid
- 5 Garments
- 7 Enclosure of the ribs
- 10 Female rabbits

JUMBLED ANSWERS

UEGARDP
ACRAIFN
HBOO
SVAI
CYOTLAE
DIASSEE

CREA
TINDSEY
BFSUHAL
ARPEAPL
RABGCIE
EDSO

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Crossjumble

Final clue: Go through a ... ! You'll be fined.



Cope reaches milestone

From Page 1

Cope was the second 1,000 point scorer honored by the Falcons this season as former Falcon Isaac Lane - the last Falcon to reach the 1,000 point plateau - was given the game ball from his 1,000 point game during Fitchburg's game against Framingham State on Jan. 25.

Lane reached the milestone on February 2, 2002, but was never previously honored by the school.

Cope is one of three postgraduates taking part in athletics at FSC this year as Fitchburg's Bethany Arsenault plays first base for the softball team and Leominster's Dan Navoroli is a member of the cross-country, indoor and outdoor track teams.

Cope graduated with a B.S. in Business Management last spring and he is now pursuing his MBA while using his final year of basketball eligibility.

"I think the most significant growth I've seen in Rashad is not as a player but as a student-athlete," said second-year Falcon coach Sean Conrad. "As he has got better on the court, he has got better in the classroom. Last semester he got a 3.8 as a graduate student."

Cope almost didn't come back to school, but ultimately wasn't ready to walk away from competitive basketball, or the classroom, yet.

"I wasn't going to come back because of my son," said Cope, who became a father last season when Tenia Gilbert gave birth to Tavaj Cope on February 26, 2004. "The reason I came back is for grad school and to get my masters."

Cope leads the Falcons in scoring (15.4 ppg),



FSC photo

Rashad Cope and coach Sean Conrad.

rebounding (7.7 rpg), field goal percentage (51.3) and minutes played (30.07). Those numbers are good for fifth, seventh, sixth and fourth in the MASCAC and he's already matched his career high of 28 points once this season.

Cope broke out offensively last year, when Coach Conrad replaced Jack Scott and moved the quick 6-3 senior off the wing and into the paint.

"My quickness is a big strength at my position," said Cope. "I'm a little undersized for a forward."

"Two years ago he fancied himself a wing player," added Conrad, "but he accepted without argument our decision to use him inside and he tackled the task with enthusiasm and it didn't take him long to learn how to play the post and now he knows it like the back of his hand."

It's Cope's enthusiasm for basketball that has made him a natural fit as captain of the Falcons the past two years and his aptitude on the inside of the Falcons offense has been evident since day one as he became the Falcons leading scorer (16 ppg), and rebounder (8.3

rpg) in his first year playing the post. Those numbers ranked him fifth and third in the MASCAC respectively and his team-high 51.7 shooting percentage was fourth in the conference.

Not bad considering he averaged less than eight points a game in his first two years of college basketball and even considered himself to be a better track athlete while attending Snowden International High School at Copley where he ran the 100m and the 200m as a member of the track team.

"I almost ran track here," said Cope. "I was better in track than basketball in high school."

Cope was born in Roxbury, the oldest of triplet sons (Rasheem and Robert) of Robert and Cherie Cope.

"My Mom and her friend Crystal Houston are my inspiration," added Cope, whose mother played basketball at Roxbury Community College and is now the director of the Shelburne Community Center in Roxbury and a basketball referee. "I dedicate everything I do to my Mom. She's always supported me in school and in basketball."

FALCONS 2004-2005 Winter Sports Schedule

Men's Basketball

February 10	at Newbury	7:00 pm
February 12	vs. Westfield	3:00 pm
February 15	at Framingham	7:30 pm
February 17	vs. MCLA	7:30 pm
February 19	at Bridgewater	7:00 pm
February 23	MASCAC tourney	TBA
February 26	MASCAC tourney	TBA

Women's Basketball

February 10	vs. Emerson	7:00 pm
February 12	vs. Westfield	1:00 pm
February 15	at Framingham	5:30 pm
February 17	vs. MCLA	5:30 pm
February 19	at Bridgewater	5:00 pm
February 23	MASCAC tourney	TBA
February 26	MASCAC tourney	TBA

Ice Hockey

February 12	at Plymouth	6:00 pm
February 17	vs. Suffolk	7:00 pm
February 19	at Salve Regina	7:00 pm
February 20	vs. Western N.E.	8:10 pm
February 22	at Framingham	7:40 pm

Track and Field

February 12	N.E. Alliance Meet	TBA
February 19	N.E. Division III Meet	TBA
February 26	All New England's	TBA
March 5	ECAC Championships	TBA
March 5	NCAA Championships	TBA

GO FALCONS